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| image001Joe Uecker **14th District** | **Committees**  Local Government, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs – Chair  Government Oversight & Reform – Vice Chair  JCARR – Vice Chair  Agriculture  Transportation, Commerce and Workforce  Public Utilities  Finance Sub Committee: General Government & Agency Review  Ohio Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus – Co Chair  **Ohio Senate**  Senate Building  Room 226, Second Floor  Columbus, Ohio 43215  (614) 466-8082  Uecker@ohiosenate.gov |  |

**Sponsor Testimony**

**State Senator Joseph Uecker**

**Senate Bill 21**

**Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee**

**February 15, 2017**

Thank you Chairman Coley, Ranking Member Yuko, and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Senate Bill 21.

Senate Bill 21 mirrors Senate Bill 212 which I introduced last General Assembly. It grants permissive authority for a County Board of Elections to reduce the minimum number of required precinct election officials from four to two in multi precinct locations that use electronic poll books, in any given election if approved by the Board of Elections. It does not change the bipartisan composition of precinct election officials in code; both major political parties will still have equal representation amongst poll workers.

Electronic poll books (ebooks) are revolutionizing voting in precincts across Ohio. These digital tablets are currently utilized by fifty-five counties. Their use will continue to increase as more counties take advantage of enacted state funds to assist in the cost. Electronic poll books eliminate reliance on traditional paper poll books creating a better and more efficient experience for voters and poll workers.

In multi precinct voting locations electronic poll books decrease voter wait times and create a more efficient and accurate voting process by allowing voters to check in at any poll book. If a voter is at the wrong precinct or voting location, the ebook will print out the proper location, some generate directions to the proper site as well. Electronic poll books update poll workers on revised voting procedures quickly and eliminate hours spent manually updating paper poll books. Most importantly, poll books create significant cost savings for local governments in printing and labor costs.

The Ohio Revised Code currently requires every Board of Elections to appoint four precinct election officials during each election in every precinct in Ohio. This obligation can be very cumbersome for smaller counties with fewer poll workers. The efficiencies gained through electronic poll books warrant a reevaluation of current policy. Decreasing the amount of poll workers necessary will reduce overhead costs and increase funds available to give the citizens of Ohio the accurate and efficient elections they expect and deserve.

Senate Bill 21 also removes a provision that requires a Board of Elections to send a notice to a person's address when the board cancels the person's voter registration because it received a report of their death.

This provision was enacted in a bill I sponsored during the 130th General Assembly. Each Board of Elections already receives notice from the Ohio Department of Health or a local department of health indicating a person is deceased. Sending a notice of cancelation was intended to be an additional safeguard but instead has proven to be insensitive and upsetting to many family members of the deceased individuals.

Senate Bill 21 is a common sense initiative that will save taxpayer dollars while producing more organized elections. Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.